

Ward 6 Staff



Steve Kozachik
Council Member



Ann Charles



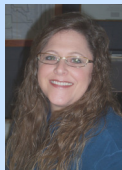
Donovan Durband



Teresa Smith



Christal Ferree



Barbara Jacob



Ward 6 – Newsletter

FEBRUARY 24, 2011

A Message from Steve

This week's Mayor and Council meeting came one day after Mayor Walkup's State of the City address. During that speech, the Mayor announced that he will not be seeking re-election this fall. While that did not come as a huge surprise, having made it public and official gives me the opportunity to now thank Mr. Walkup for the leadership he has shown over the course of the last 12 years. Together we as a community have faced several serious issues over his term in office. Today we are a strong community, despite a challenging economy, recent tragic events and working through a number of issues that relate to where we are located geographically (water, immigration, sustainable development, and more.) The Mayor can be proud of having navigated us to this point, maintaining his always confident demeanor, and one that embraces the need to engage the issues we face in a way that leaves the door open to competing views and perspectives, and with respect for our fellow community members, irrespective of surface level differences. His is not an easy job. He has served us well.

This week, we took time away from specific budget-related items. Staff is working on the framework we adopted last week and we will see that again in April. As you may recall, I voted in favor of that framework, but did so in order to bring back a reconsideration of some of the elements of what we passed last week. Before casting my vote, I made it clear that I reserve the right to reopen the issues of transit, debt restructuring, assumed growth rates, rates of reductions to non-public safety departments, and more. That's a work in progress. No easy answers - my hope is to be able to offer some compromise solutions that the rest of the council can embrace on reconsideration.

This week's primary issue was the discussion of water rates. Tucson water operates on a budget that is comprised of nearly 70% debt service. Considering that their costs are significantly associated with building and maintaining expensive infrastructure, that's understandable. When water revenues drop (successful conservation efforts and a decrease in development) the cash reserves of Tucson Water are affected negatively. With that in mind, today Tucson Water presented us with a 5 year financial plan that includes an 8% increase in water revenues this year and next. We were asked to approve that plan for a later public hearing. I voted against it for two primary reasons.





Important Phone Numbers

Tucson Police Department

911 or 791-4444
nonemergency

Mayor & Council
Comment Line
791-4700

Neighborhood Resources

791-4605

Park Wise
791-5071

Water Issues
791-3242

Pima County Animal
Control
243-5900

Street Maintenance
791-3154

Planning and
Development
Services 791-5550

Southwest Gas
889-1888

Gas Emergency/
Gas Leaks

889-1888

West Nile Virus
Hotline

243-7999

Environment
Service

791-3171

Graffiti Removal
792-2489

AZ Game & Fish
628-5376

Continued: A Message From Steve

First, the growth projections on which the plan is based are flat. I understand and appreciate the need to be conservative in estimating growth. And yet, in our budget assumptions we adopted a framework that assumes a small amount of growth over the next several years. Based on what we hear from the economists, I believe that's reasonable. To assume flat growth means Tucson Water has to find the dollars they will need through rate increases that would otherwise be made up from fees collected through development. I'd much prefer to assume some small growth figure and adjust later on if that doesn't pan out - and not raise rates now. The other issue relates to Tucson Water asking to sell \$40M in bonds that are directly related to main replacements associated with road projects. Many of those are RTA projects. In the original RTA legislation, the RTA sales tax was to pay for utility costs, not Tucson Water. In 2006, the RTA changed the policy to not include reimbursements for relocation (unless required by law). The effect was to shift the costs to the jurisdictions and more importantly to you, the rate payers. For 5 years this shift has gone on without discussion and water bill rates have increased over 37%. I did not vote for the increases but was out voted 6-1. My point was simply that we should confront that issue head on, place the burden on RTA to use the sales tax we're already paying to support their road projects for the utility work, and not pass along a \$40 million bill to ratepayers because the Council lacks the will to take on the issue.

In the Arizona Daily Star article that addressed this issue on Thursday http://azstarnet.com/article_d3b8e13d-d94b-5ccb-8556-cb0ddab74146.html the Director of the RTA refuted my claim that the original Cost Projections included utility costs. Oddly, the exact language from the 2005 RTA Cost Projection Report includes this summary of what was to make up the RTA projects costs:

Quantities were generated for pavement, bridges, box culverts, walls, curb & gutter, sidewalks, utilities, traffic elements, removals, etc. and applied to the present day estimated unit costs to calculate subtotals for all items

If you check each of the 38 projects you'll find a breakdown of the costs the RTA included in their plan. Here are 3 examples:

22nd Street

Assumptions: Adjust/Relocate all Utilities for Length of Project
Remove Electric Poles and Underground Electric
Item Length Unit Cost Extended Amount
Utility Adjustment: 11,375 \$150 \$1,706,250

East Barraza/Aviation

Assumptions: Adjust/Relocate all Utilities for identified areas
Assume no Utilities in I-10
Item Length Unit Cost Extended Amount
Utility Adjustment: 19,900 \$150 \$2,985,000



Important Phone Numbers

Broadway - Euclid to Country Club

Assumptions: Adjust/Relocate all Utilities for Length of Project

Remove Electric Poles and Underground Electric

Item Length Unit Cost Extended Amount

Utility Adjustment: 10,100 \$300 \$3,030,000

Clearly the original intent was to have the RTA tax pay for utility costs. If you would like to fact check me, here's the link to the 2005 RTA Projected Project Cost Report:

<http://www.rtamobility.com/images/stories/pdfs/RTAPlan/RTACosts/RTAOrigCostEst-Report.pdf>

My hope is that between now and the time of the public hearing, we may be able to revisit the level of RTA contribution to utility work and come back to you with a Water Financial Plan that moderates the present \$40M bond debt being requested. This might also be the catalyst for a community wide reconsideration of the RTA road projects that were voted on several years ago. Times, needs and financial capacity all change. And more importantly, the Council needs to be aware and respond to policy changes that affect our citizens. Please let the Council know how you feel about these water rate increases in light of the fact that you, as citizens are already paying a tax for the RTA projects.

Over the past few months, there has been an increase in the number of calls we've received at the Ward Office related to sightings and encounters with wild animals. Most recently the concerns have been in relation to packs of javelina that have taken up residence in several areas around Ward 6. I and my staff have had numerous contacts with both the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Pima Animal Care Center in an effort to educate ourselves on what sorts of things residents can do to enhance the safety of their neighborhoods. Much of this is intuitive: don't put out your garbage containers until the morning of the pick-up, don't leave pet foods on the ground for your domestic animals to eat, enclose compost pits and vegetable gardens (javelina don't jump), check with G&F before planting flowers because some species are less of an attractant for javelina, don't place birdseed on the ground, remove fallen nuts and fruit from the ground, and more. These suggestions can be found on the Arizona Game and Fish website. The bottom line message is that food will not necessarily attract these animals (they're here anyway) as much as it will simply make them stay. It is a violation of Title 13 of the Arizona Revised Statutes to feed wild animals. G&F has the authority to cite violators, but they much prefer to come and make presentations to educate residents on the best ways to avoid unwanted contact with these animals. To that end, I have asked for a March 8th agenda item in which representatives from the Game and Fish Department will share with Mayor and Council some insights into how best to cope with living in harmony with the variety of species that make up our desert environment. If you cannot watch that study session (Channel 12), I would invite you to visit their website and take in all of the good suggestions you'll find there. In the meantime, if you have encounters with javelina (or other wild animals) feel free to continue to let us or Game and Fish know. We will share that information with the G&F Department and that will serve as an aid in their efforts to track the patterns and nature of contacts throughout the community.

Senator John
McCain (R)
520-670-6334

Senator Jon Kyl (R)
520-575-8633

Congresswoman
Gabrielle Giffords
(D)
(8th District)
520-881-3588

Congressman
Raul Grijalva (D)
(7th District)
520-622-6788

Governor Janice
Brewer (R)
Governor of Arizona
602-542-4331
Toll free:
1-800-253-0883

State Legislators
Toll Free
Telephone:
1-800-352-8404
Internet:
www.azleg.gov

Mayor Bob Walkup
791-4201

City Infoguide
<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/infoguide>

Finally, the Fourth Avenue Street Fair is the signature event on the Avenue, ranked nationally as one of the premier events of it's kind. The operators have much to be proud of, and the dollars they raise over two weekends per year provide significant financial support to surrounding neighborhoods, as well as paying for security and custodial services up and down the Avenue year 'round. That having been said, some of the merchants felt their voices weren't being heard sufficiently in areas related to staging, and other operational issues relevant to the Fair. With those concerns in mind, I asked for a meeting of representatives of the Fourth Avenue Merchants Association and some of the local merchants. That meeting occurred, we had a spirited and honest exchange and all came away with the belief that some doors were opened. The Fair is strong, and I believe the relationships between the partners on the Avenue are now even stronger than before.

Sincerely,



Steve Kozachik
Council Member, Ward 6
www.tucsonaz.gov/ward6

2011 Major League Soccer Desert Cup



Major League Soccer is coming to Tucson next week, with **Desert Cup** at Hi Corbett Field on Friday, March 4 & Saturday, March 5. The New York Red Bulls and Sporting Kansas City will face off against FC Tucson and the Arizona Saguaros, then against each other in a 4-game two-day exhibition series. Games start at 6 pm & 8 pm.

General Admission is \$12, VIP Admission is \$45

For more information please visit: www.fctucson.com or call 520.334.1115

